A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING

LEGAL AWARENESS IN CLIENT CARE AMONG NURSES WORKING IN

PRIVATE HOSPITALS, KRISHNAGIRI DT

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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study to assess the knowledge regarding legal awareness in client care among nurses working in private hospitals, Krishnagiri dt.

KEYWORDS: Awareness on Legal Issues and Obligations among Nurses, Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

Each country has what is called Nurse Practice act. The guidelines and law outlined in the act is pertained to all nurses who are licensed in the concerned state. In krishnagiri dt the staff nurses were not fully aware of their legal obligations while taking care of patients, which has also been supported by the previous research study findings, hence the researcher wanted to disseminate the current research findings, in order to bring awareness and to insist the importance of education program for nurses.. Nursing practice is surrounded by many legal aspects because nurses are accountable for their professional judgments and action. For the implementation of high quality of nursing practice in the world of latest medical technological advances, a good knowledge of legal aspects of health care is a necessity. The expanded role of the nurses requires a higher level of education, knowledge, skill and decision making capabilities. Knowledge of legal aspects in nursing is absolutely essential for each nurse to safeguard self and clients from legal complications.

OBJECTIVES

To assess the nurse's knowledge regarding legal awareness in providing client care. 2. To identify the field of deficit in knowledge on Legal awareness and responsibilities. 3. To compare the level of knowledge with selected demographic variables.

Setting: The present study was carried out at the private hospital in Dharmapuri Dt.

Research Design: Non Experimental descriptive research design was used.

Sample Size: The ANM and GNM qualified nurses 30 were chosen from private hospitals in Krishnagiri Dt using convenient sampling technique.

METHODS

The study was undertaken after getting due permission from the Medical Administrator of the hospital. Keeping in view the ethical considerations, the participants were explained the purpose and the methodology of the study and their

consents were obtained. A closed ended questionnaire was prepared to assess the level of legal awareness among the nursing staff. The GNM and ANM nursing staff deployed at the general wards, ICU and post-op ward were chosen as a sample.

Research Tool

The structured questionnaire comprised of 25 questions which was developed by the researcher was used to collect data. The validity of the questionnaire was established by consultation with experts. Reliability of the tool was done by Kuder-Richardson formula, which is 0.78. Pre-testing was done to check the clarity, feasibility and practicability of the items and found to be clear and feasible.

The questions were all multiple choice questions with one correct answer. The results were analyzed using three parameters viz – Age, working place and Experience.

Data Analysis: Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data.

Level of Knowledge regarding Legal awareness in Nursing was graded as follows.

Level of Knowledge % Score

- Excellent >90%

- Good 71-90 %

- Adequate 51-70 %

- Poor < 50 %

Among 30 nurses 50% of them are between 22 yrs and 25 yrs, and 30% between 26 yrs and 30 yrs, and rest of them 20% are above 31 yrs. Nurses working units show that 10% are ICU staff nurses, 76.6% general ward nurses, and 13.3% are surgical ward. The following table indicates the comparison of knowledge with specific demographic variables.

Association level of knowledge regarding legal issues in client care:

Table 1

S. No	Demographic Variables Age in Yrs	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Chi-Square
1	22-25	0	2	12	1	
2	26-30	1	2	5	1	3.01 Not significant
3	Above 31	0	4	2	0	

Association of level of knowledge regarding legal issues in client care with Experience.

Table 2

S. No	Experience In Yrs	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Chi-Square
1	Fresh graduate	0	5	4	1	
2	Less than 5 yrs	1	3	10	1	4.78 Not significant
3	Above 5 yrs	0	1	4	0	

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Association of level of knowledge regarding legal issues in client care relation with working area

Table 3

S. No	Working Area	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Chi-Square
1	General ward	1	6	16	1	7.12 Not significant
2	Post op ward	0	2	2	0	
3	ICU	0	0	3	0	

DISCUSSIONS

The main findings of this study established that the knowledge of staff nurses across various categories was inadequate. Both ANM and GNM nurses working in private hospital are deficit in knowledge on legal acts such as malpractice and negligence act, patient's right, Importance of legal documentation in protecting nurses, legal guidelines, legal boundaries of nursing practice in each state, procedures in civil proceedings. The relationship of selected variables showed that there was no significant relationship between nurses knowledge with their age, gender, duration of clinical experience. There was a significant relationship between level of knowledge with their professional qualification and training institute ($p < 0.05$) which is also supported by a study done in Ludhiana. Overall result of the study suggested that the nurses must have in depth awareness and knowledge through periodic workshop to train them on adherence to nursing code of ethics, utilization of hospital policy and personal development.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A similar study may be conducted to compare knowledge of staff nurses among private hospitals and same could be conducted in Government hospital using random sampling technique. A comparative experimental study may also be useful to identify the effectiveness of structured teaching program on legal issues and responsibilities.

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